

League of Women Voters of Wellesley
Board Meeting Minutes
February 14, 2023 / 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Home of Wendy Garber, 3 Garden Road

Attending: Niki Brinkman-Ofenloch, Laura Brown-MacKinnon, Marguerite Chatelier, Irene Flint, Wendy Harris Garber, Erry Johnson, Ann-Mara Lanza, Bonny Nothern, Ellie Perkins, Jenny Zannetos who attended on Zoom

Absent: Margie Palladino, Ivy Wang

Guest: Rama Ramaswamy

The meeting was called to order at 12:35 p.m. by President Wendy Garber. The meeting was recorded on Zoom.

1. Welcome - Wendy

- a. Wendy read the Land Acknowledgement from Wellesley College.
- b. Wendy proposed that we shift the agenda to take DEI earlier as Rama will not be able to attend the entire meeting.

2. Minutes - Ellie

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of January 10, 2023. The motion carried by a voice vote.

VOTED: To approve the minutes of January 10, 2023.

3. DEI - Bonny, Marguerite, Rama

- a. Bonny expressed her gratitude to Rama for joining our board meeting. We are fortunate to have Rama, given her expertise and devotion to promoting DEI in Wellesley and her work on World of Wellesley. Rama has agreed to help us flesh out our DEI policy which is only one sentence but complies with the National League's. The hope is that eventually consideration of DEI will seep into all of our activities and deliberations.
- b. Rama intends to make discussion of DEI comfortable and started by showing a video (Business Insider: Charting Prehistoric Human Migration) that is widely used to demonstrate how our ancestors came from all over the globe over the past 150,000 years of continual migration, leading to our current diversity. This means people who don't look like each other live in the same place as neighbors and it can create discomfort because of change, language barriers or cultural differences. We need to learn how to treat this as a norm rather than something strange. We also need to ensure that the League activities are comfortable, equitable and inclusive. Good intentions aren't enough; we need to be aware of what may result from our actions and words. Rama emphasized how important it is to be able to apologize directly and sincerely if we make a mistake in the process of becoming comfortable with diversity and interacting with people who don't look like us.
- c. Erry noted that in the very beginning there was a real survival advantage to being part of a pack and we continue this to this day to identify as self versus other. We need to realize that this is no longer necessary, we can expand the concept of tribe into a whole community.

4. DEI Task Force - Ann Mara

- a. Following the presentation at the DEI Task Force Coffee on March 10, the hope is that our League will agree to support Article 17 at Town Meeting. This article asks Town Meeting to pass a resolution that we commit to the Town of Wellesley being an inclusive and open community for all and also to fund a \$100,000 Equity Audit. The Audit would assess how inclusive our government and policies and programs are and would assess the community as a whole to see how people are feeling about living here. This information gathering is a tool to help us move forward and to establish a baseline for future assessment.
- b. We are cosponsoring the community-wide training, Wellesley Foundational Workshop, on March 14 from 7 to 9 p.m. on Zoom. This occurs prior to Town Meeting in order to give Town Meeting Members the history and the language so that they have a context for the discussion of Article 17. The Task Force is hearing that there is a lot of distrust in the community about what DEI means. They are trying to alleviate some of that distrust and to encourage people to be more open. We all need to encourage people to come.

5. Treasurer - Jenny

- a. Our assets total \$36,997.50. This month dues and donations trickled in. Jarvis Appliance and Roche Brothers each gave us \$1,500 for the postcard mailing, but only the Jarvis donation is reflected in our January balance sheet.
- b. The postcard mailing this year cost \$3732.90, a bit more than last year. We're about \$700 short and we could apply in April for the Scharfman Grant for \$300 towards this project.
- c. We also paid \$300 for the software for Vote411. They fortunately didn't raise the price as they had indicated they might.
- d. Our Needham Bank CD, valued at \$5247, is up for renewal at the end of the month. The bank is offering a 13-month CD for 4.35% which is much better than the interest we received last year. We considered only reinvesting \$ 5,000 in the CD and using the accrued interest to cover the shortfall in the postcard mailing. We also considered using funding that Voter Services won't need as there won't be any naturalization ceremonies in Lowell during the coming year. We decided to reinvest all the accrued interest in the current CD.
VOTED: To reinvest the current \$5247 CD at Needham Bank into a 13-month CD at 4.35%.
- e. Jenny needs volunteers for the Budget Committee: Irene, Marguerite and Erry volunteered to help.
- f. Ann-Mara raised the possibility of budgeting funds for DEI activities, perhaps adding to our budgets for programming, for example for translators at events. Marguerite has asked Tanya Roy how this is broken down at the state level and learned that in every activity or program during this legislative year the state has focused on DEI and the cost has amounted to about 25% of total funding. Wendy suggested that the Budget Committee should keep this in mind as they consider each of our budget categories. Fortunately, Marguerite and Bonny are currently determining what questions should be asked to accomplish this.
- g. We need to consider whether we will continue to participate in the State Phonathon to raise funding for the State League. We would receive 20% for any amount we bring in during February by reaching out to those who have not yet donated. In the past we organized a phone bank and brought in more money to our league, but no one is really interested in making these calls and people tend not to answer the phone. We decided to just send out letters this year and next year, not make phone calls. We will be reimbursed for postage and whatever we bring in will be welcome.

6. Programming - Irene

- a. Margie sent us all a report on the successful Alice Peisch event where we had 34 people in attendance with many new faces.
- b. The Michael Reidy coffee was very good. He was personable and has actually connected with four generations of . The Wellesley residents. The schools seem to be doing a lot in civics studies.
- c. The DEI event on March 10, 2023, will be a brown-bag lunch, not a coffee, from 12 to 1:30 p.m. We will need to send an Evite and Ann-Mara volunteered to take care of this.
- d. We are co-sponsoring the DEI Workshop on March 14, 2023, from 7-9 p.m. on Zoom, discussed above.
- e. We are also co-sponsoring with WOW the Wellesley Community Book Read on March 21, 2023, at Wellesley college in Tishman Commons from 6:30-8:30 p.m. It is necessary to pay \$5 to register.
- f. Irene will let Tanya Roy know about these events and our attendance numbers.
- g. Margie is interested in having a domestic violence coffee or brown bag in April, perhaps after Town Meeting.
- h. Annual Meeting will be May 17, 2023, with a potluck supper at 6 p.m. and the meeting starting at 7 p.m. Location TBD. Laura offered to work on the Annual Meeting Workbook and she will ask Ann Rappaport if she will help.

7. Voter Services - Erry

- a. Erry had a fabulous voter registration event with Ivy and Skye who scheduled it on Intervention Day at the high school and pulled it together in three days. They recruited student helpers and got 24 registrations, the most in years, most ever for a town election.
- b. Margie solicited sponsorships and it was once again a scramble. We were successful with Jarvis and Roche Brothers. In the future we will not try Babson, instead we will try Wellesley College, a bank and possibly an insurance agency. Margie has written excellent instructions on how to handle this in the future.
- c. The Town Government Handbook was beautifully edited by Marjorie Freiman and Gig Babson, then checked by town employees. The link will be ready to be sent to all elected officials after the election and will be on the Town Clerk's website as well as our website and in the Swellesley Report.
- d. All candidates will be participating in Candidates Night. The retiree recognitions will be read at that time. There is one declared write-in candidate and he will be included.
- e. Lucy Costa is taking over Vote yard sign wrangling.
- f. Barbara McMahon will do one Town Meeting Prep session on March 23rd at 7 p.m. in the Kingsbury Room of the Police Station.
- g. Erry will do a debrief with everyone involved in Meet the Candidates Night.

8. Nominating Committee - Bonny

- a. The Nominating Committee has been meeting and welcomes any suggestions for potential board members, as well as suggestions of people we might try to involve in preliminary ways with the board in order to create a pipeline.
- b. Bonny also has a high school student who would like to help us with tasks or projects.

9. Membership - Niki

- a. We have 142 members now: 105 Primary, 13 Additional, 8 Lifetime and 16 Student Members. Michelle Mollica is a new member.

- b. Outreach: Emails were sent to everyone who attended the Peisch event who is not a member. After the election, emails will be sent to all townwide candidates and Town Meeting Members, as well as congratulatory emails to all elected LWVW members.
- c. Would it be possible to do a town-wide nonprofit fair at the library, with a day and an evening session to boost community involvement? Something similar used to happen at the Pancake Breakfast.
- d. We do get members, but perhaps they need to get involved with one of our activities to eventually be interested in a Board position. We need to offer them things to do.
- e. Bonny mentioned the possibility of having a Steering Committee, instead of co-presidents they just split up the necessary tasks.

10. President - Wendy

The Frances Perkins Traveling Exhibit will be in the Needham Library for the month of February and it has been in other locations recently, like Dana Hall. Wendy was contacted for suggestions of potential Wellesley locations.

Reminder: Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, March 14, 2023, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. in Room 110 of the Warren Building.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellie Perkins
LWVW Secretary